

A Brief

APOLOGY

IN

Behalf of the PEOPLE

In *Derision* Call'd

QUAKERS.

WRITTEN

For the Information of our Sober and
Well-inclined Neighbours in and about the
Town of *Warminster* in the County of
Wilts.

BY

WILL. CHANDLER, ALEX. PYOT, J. HODGES,
And some others.

*By Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good
Report, as Deceivers and yet True, as Unknown
and yet well known, as dying and behold we live,
2 Cor. 6. 8, 9.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Thomas Northcott*, in *George-yard* in
Lombard-street.





A brief A P O L O G Y, &c.



It is not that we love Contention, or desire Controversie, or are impatient in bearing Reproaches, that we appear thus publick, but such have been the repeated high Charges, and smart Lashes, that our Adversaries (more especially some of the *Presbyterian* Assembly) have of late taken a Liberty, liberally and lavishly to bestow upon us, that we find ourselves concern'd to Clear and Vindicate the Truth and Innocency of our Christian Profession, from those black Aspersions that have rendred it so frightful and formidable, as though 'twere only a meer complication of pestilent Errors, as well as to satisfy the Minds of such of our piously-inclined Neighbours, as may be desirous to hear us speak for ourselves, as also for the Information of those who may have been imposed upon, by that Dress wherein our Opposers have represented us. And although these can Object nothing material against us now, that hath not been long since over and over offer'd by some of the same Perswasion, and have as often received Answers from some or other of our Friends, (some of which have never yet been by them replied unto) yet forasmuch as those may not have come to the View of many of our Neighbours,

bours, for whom this is chiefly intended, we
 thought fit briefly to say so much as we think
 may be accomodate to the present occasion; and
 which perhaps with unprejudic'd minds may be-
 speak our Creed not so unsound and erroneous as
 our somewhat different deportment hath rendered
 us obnoxious and contemptible, as well as dis-
 tasteful to those who either ambitiously affect
 honour and respect, and love greetings, or think
 a complaisant compliance to the fashions, Cus-
 toms, and complements of the Age, to be one
 of the chiefest felicities of this Life, and best ex-
 pression of their Civility and good Manners.

Rom. 3. 5.

Joh. 5. 44.
 Mat. 23.
 10.

We therefore desire our well-disposed Neigh-
 bours, candidly to weigh what we have to al-
 ledge against the Clamours of those, who to be
 sure will not set us out to our best advantage,
 and to receive an Account from ourselves what
 we are, and what we believe and hold for Chris-
 tian Truths, who certainly must needs know
 better our own Belief than those who perhaps
 never examin'd it, to any other end than to find
 fault, if ever they did it; and also that you will
 not think it strange, that we express not our
 Belief in some particulars, in the affected Terms
 of other Professors of Christianity, but think it
 more reasonable and safe to content ourselves
 with that Dress of Language, in which the Holy
 Ghost thought fit to hand them to us in the
 Holy Scriptures; those most Excellent and
 Divine Writings, which above all others in the
 World, challenge our reverence and most dili-
 gent reading, those Oracles of God, and rich
 Christian Treasure of Divine saving Truths, which

Ro. 15. 4. were written for our learning, that we through
 patience and comfort of them may have hope,
 2 Tim. and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correc-
 c 3. v. 15, tion, and instruction in righteousness, to the per-
 16, 17. fecting

fecting and throughly furnishing of the Man of GOD to every good Work, making him wise unto salvation thro' Faith which is in Christ Jesus; containing all Christian Doctrines necessary to be believed for salvation, and are a sufficient external standard and touch-stone to try the Doctrines of men; and we say with the Apostle, whosoever shall Publish, and propagate any other Gospel and Faith than is therein testified of to us, by those inspired Pen-men, who were the first Promulgators thereof, though he were an Angel; let him be accursed; all which, and whatsoever is therein contained, we as firmly believe as any of you do, and as 'tis the duty of every sincere Christian, we are heartily thankful to God for them, who through his good Providence hath preserved them to our Time, to our great benefit and comfort.

We Believe in that Great Omnipotent God, that made and created all things, and gave us our Being, whom in sincerity of heart we fear, reverence and worship, being seriously concern'd for our souls welfare to eternhity. We believe that Great Myſtery, that there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One in Being and Substance: And as do ye, so do we also hope for and expect Salvation, only and alone through the Son of God our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST of *Nazareth*; believing that God the Father hath ordained him for Salvation to the ends of the Earth; and that no other Name is given under Heaven, by which men shall be saved; who being conceived by the Holy Ghost, in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, was born of her at *Bethlehem*; as also his Holy and Exemplary Life, perfectly free from sin; his Doctrine, Miracles, Sufferings, and Death upon

Gal. 1. 8.

1 Joh. 5. 7.

Isa. 49. 6.
Act. 13. 47
& 4. 12.

1 Pet. 2.

21. 22.

Heb 4. 14.

the Cross, without the Gates of *Jerusalem*; his
 Ro. 8 34. Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension into
 1 Tim. 2. Heaven, where he is at the Right Hand of God
 5. 6. the Father, perfect GOD and perfect Man, and
 1 Jo. 2. 1, 2. the alone Mediator between GOD and Man, and is
 our Advocate with the Father, and ever liveth to
 Act. 10. 42 make Intercession for us; and also shall Judge both
 Quick and Dead: All which and whatsoever else
 is recorded of him in the Sacred Scriptures, we
 firmly believe.

This JESUS, in whom dwelt the fulness of the
 Co. 2. 9. God-head, we believe offer'd up himself accord-
 Eph. 5. 2. ing to the Will of the Father, an acceptable sacri-
 1 Joh. 2. 2. fice to God, and became a Propitiation for the
 Heb. 10. 12 sins of Mankind, *to the end of the world*, and dy-
 Rom. 5. ed for all Men, as all dyed in *Adam*; through
 v. 12, 18. whose Blood God proclaims Redemption and
 2 Cor. 5. Salvation to Man, and offers to be reconciled,
 19. and freely for his Son's sake to remit, forgive and
 Ro. 3. 25. pass by all past offences to as many as shall truly
 Luk. 24. and heartily repent of their sins, and turn from
 47. the same, and shall so believe in our Lord Jesus
 Acts 10. Christ, and love him as for the future to live a
 43 & 26. holy Circumspect Christian life, and obey his
 20. commands, thereby continuing in his love.

Which holy life so much Celebrated and strict-
 ly kept to in the Primitive Ages of Christianity,
 that whosoever named the name, or took the
 name of Christ upon them were to depart from
 iniquity, we believe ought to be inseparable from
 a true and faithful Christian as ever accompany-
 ing a true living and active Faith; and it seems
 was thought no less necessary by those who compos-
 ed the promise that should be made in behalf of in-
 fants before they were admitted into that once
 sacred Catalogue, (to wit) that as they came to
 years of discretion, they should forsake the Devil
 and all his works the pomps and vanities of this
 wick-

wicked World, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and keep God's holy will, and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their lives : This we believe to be the bounden duty of mankind, and though our Opposers have scost us, and branded us with error for holding Perfection, because in pleading for a holy righteous life as that which is well pleasing to God, and vouching his power to be stronger in man, as man cleaves to it, and believes to rescue him from under the power of Satan, than is that of the devil to retain him in Thralldom, we have sometimes made use of the words of Christ and his Apostles, as be you perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect, he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure, &c. yet have we never pretended to a moral Perfection beyond what is contained in the above promise, which is sound and true in itself, and is that which God requires of us ; and therefore 'tis that we frequently press it's necessity, and fervently exhort people to it's performance. And notwithstanding we have hence been falsely accused that we expect to be saved by our own works as being Meritorious, yet we don't acknowledge a holy life as the Efficient and procuring Cause of our Salvation ; which we no less than you totally refer to the free Grace, and mercy of God in Christ without any merit in Man, but we esteem it as a Constant companion thereto, and a necessary condition on our part in compliance with God's gracious offer, without which we may not obtain it, being inseparably annexed to that Faith which only pleaseth God, and is but our reasonable duty.

And we believe that although Christ thus offer'd up himself once for all, for the sins of all men to the end of the world, thereby rendering repentance and amendment of life prevalent with God

Luk. 1.75.

Ro. 6. 18,
19, 22.2 Cor. 7.
1.Eph. 4. 24.
Thes. 3. 13.& 4. 7.
Heb. 12.10. 14.
1 Joh. 4.

4.

Mat. 5. 48.
Col 4. 12.

1 Joh. 3. 3.

Eph. 2. 8.

James 2,
18 to the
end.Heb. 11. 6.
Ro 12 1, 2.Heb 2 9,
& 10. 12.

- God; yet that the Traditional Belief of that alone is not sufficient to entitle us to that common Salvation that comes by him, but that 'tis of necessity that we truly repent and be Converted from the evil to the good, and therefore 'tis no less necessary for us now than 'twas for believers in the
- Act. 3. 19. & 26. 18, 20. Apostles days, that we be turned from darkness to light, or in other terms, from the dark power of Satan, to the power of God who is light, that thereby we may every one know the work of Redemption and Salvation, wrought in and for our selves: For 'tis not enough to believe that Christ dyed, if we feel not the blessed effects of his death, who came to save us from our sins, and bless us by turning us from our iniquities, and gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a Peculiar people zealous of good works.
- Mat. 1. 21. Act. 3. 26. Tit. 2. 14. For we believe such to be the natural State of Man in the fall, that by nature we are dead as to God, at a distance from him prone to evil, and to gratify the desires of our sensual minds, sway'd by the corrupt and sinful lusts of the flesh, and under the power of a strange King, rul'd by the Prince of the Power of Air, so that our inward man being thus dead from God, we cannot exercise our spiritual senses towards him, nor can this natural man perceive, know, or savour things of God, which only are spiritually discerned; wherefore, notwithstanding our Saviour dyed for us, we are yet by nature in a miserable condition, in Captivity to our soul's Enemy, except we know the second *Adam* the Lord from Heaven, that quickning spirit, to quicken our souls, and make us alive to God again, that being restored to the use of our inward senses, we may by the assistance of his Divine Light (wherewith for that end he hath blest all the Sons and Daughters of Men) see our selves
- Gen. 2. 17. Ro. 5. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Gen. 6. 5. Ro. 7. 5. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 26. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 45, 47. Eph. 2. 15. Col. 2. 13. Ro. 8. 11. Eph. 5. 13, 14. 1 Joh. 1. 5. 7. Eph. 2. 3. & 5. 6.

selves in this sad and lost state under the wrath of
 God, and abhor our selves therefore, and under
 this living sence (wherein things will appear with
 another aspect than before) cry to God for deli-
 verance there-from, with such inward hearty sor-
 row as works a true repentance for the same. 'Tis
 not our being sprinkled, when infants, that will
 make us true Christians, convert us from being
 children of Wrath to become children of Grace,
 and Sons of God, and members of Christ's Church,
 and invest us in an interest in him; 'tis not learn-
 ing our Catechism and subscribing to certain Ar-
 ticles of Faith, though never so Orthodox, and
 being educated in a historical belief of what Christ
 did for us above sixteen hundred years ago; 'tis
 not this only that will administer a sufficient, true,
 and saving knowledge of Christ, and really inter-
 est us in his death and sufferings, all which peo-
 ple may talk of and please themselves withal,
 and yet continue as fast bound under the domini-
 on of Satan (who still rules where disobedience
 is) as those less perfect in that Lesson, but the true
 and saving knowledge of Christ is to know our
 selves turn'd from darkness to light, from the
 power of Satan to the power of God, that by it
 we may be delivered from the power of darkness,
 and be translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son,
 to know his saving power really to rescue and
 redeem us from under the power of him that hath
 enthralld us, and leads Captive at his will those who
 lives in the vanity of their minds, to know him
 bind this strong man, to spoil his goods and dis-
 possess, and cast him out, to know Christ to sit in
 the soul as a refiner, to burn up, consume and
 destroy, to purify and thoroughly to purge out
 whatsoever is contrary to him, to wash us and
 make us clean that we may have a right to a part
 in him, that being cleansed and sanctified, he may
 take

2 Cor. 7.
10.

Joh. 1. 12,
13.
Ro. 8. 14.

Act. 26 18

Col. 1. 13.

Joh. 8.

32. 36.

Mar. 3. 27.

Mal. 3. 2, 3.

Luk. 3. 16,
17.

Ro. 15 16.

Joh. 13. 8.

1 Thel.

5. 23.

take 1 Cor. 1. 3:

Joh. 14. 23. take up his abode with us exercising his Kingly
 Heb. 13. 21 power, and working in us both to will and to do
 of his good pleasure. The mind being thus dis-
 entangled, and having cast off his former yoke,
 2 Cor. 5. the old things being done away, all things now
 17 become new; a new tender heart of flesh accor-
 Ezek. 36. ding to the promise, new thoughts, desires, incli-
 26. nations, affections, words, actions, this new in-
 side producing a new outside also, even through-
 Mat. 23. out a new Creature, now in Christ indeed, and
 26. really entitled to those benefits that accrue to men
 through him; that living faith that pleaseth God
 Jam. 2. 18, and gives victory, and is ever fruitful to him in
 to the good works, being begotten, and this work of
 end Redemption and Regeneration thus wrought in
 Heb. 12. 2. the soul by Jesus Christ, together with that most
 precious Sacrifice he offer'd up when his precious
 Blood shed upon the Cross for us, we believe com-
 pleats the Salvation of every soul that is thus awa-
 Ro. 6. 11, kened, and made alive, and set free, by the power
 13. and spirit of him that is the way, the truth, and the
 Joh. 8. 36. life of every soul that truly lives to God, to walk in
 that holy way of life, truth and peace, that was prepa-
 Isa. 35. 8, red of old for the ransomed and redeemed to walk in.
 9.

And we believe that he graciously waits with
 exceeding great Kindness, and long suffering, that
 Rev. 3. 20. Men may repent, knocking at the door of every
 Man's heart, freely offering, but not imposing his
 assistance to this most concerning Work, and
 Mat. 23. change in the minds of Men; so that in the Day
 37. wherein God will judge the World by Jesus
 Christ, and every secret thing will be made ma-
 nifest, God will be justified and clear of the Blood
 of all Men, and every mouth will be stopped, and
 every Man's Condemnation will be of himself for
 having rejected the day of his Visitation, wherein
 God calls to Man, and offers to be reconciled to
 him for resisting the Strivings, and slighting the Re-

Reproofs of his Spirit, which in matchless Mercy he hath given Man to instruct him, and shew, and lead him in the Way of Life and Peace. Neh. 9, 20.

We believe, that though the pravity of man's nature in the fall, is such, that the Natural or Carnal Man, that is enmity against God in the state of meer nature, minds only the things of the flesh, and naturally brings forth the works thereof, and cannot please God, nor keep and observe his Laws, but is prone to evil; yet that those who embrace the visitation of God, and are really regenerated and born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of God that lives and abides for ever, that ingrafted word that is quick and powerful, and able to save and sanctify the soul, are born into a new life, and invested with another and higher power, and becomes spiritually minded and by the spirit are set at liberty to walk after the spirit, and bring forth it's fruits, and receives ability from the spirit to serve God acceptably, being now led by the spirit of God and become his Children, taught of him, and through the spirit of adoption receiv'd into their hearts, have right to call God Father, and Jesus Lord, for having through the spirit mortified the Old Man or first Nature, with his corrupt and depraved inclinations and evil deeds, and put him off, having crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, they put on the New and Heavenly Man, which after God is Created in righteousness and true holiness, and being renewed in the spirit of their minds, they now walk in Newness of Life, and are really in Christ, and therefore are changed and become new Creatures, and now thinks and acts under the conduct of a principal Superiour to that which formerly governed them, having their minds raised to a Region above that of fallen Nature, so that now the stream of their thoughts, desires

Neh. 9,
20.

Ro. 8. 5, 7,
8.

1 Pet. 1.
23.
Heb 4. 12.
Jam. 1. 21.
Joh. 17.
17, 19.

Joh. 3. 6.

Ro. 8. 14,
15.

1 Cor. 12.
3.
Ro. 8. 13.
& 6 6.
Eph 4 22,
23. 24.
Gal. 5. 24.
Col. 3. 9,
10.

Ro. 6. 4,
& 7. 6.

desires and actions, runs in another current, and the bent of their affections are after those things that are above where Christ is; that eye being now open'd that sees a more transcendent beauty and desirableness in the invisible and durable treasures of him, than all the transcient felicities of this world can afford.

And we believe that whosoever expects the blessed imputation of Christ's righteousness, ought thus to put on the Lord Jesus, and to be thus cloathed upon, and covered with his righteousness, and in measure have his Holy Life brought forth in and through them, and know him to enliven and influence their minds, and to work in and for them, and that without him they can do nothing, but thro' him that strengthens them, they can do whatsoever he commands them, that as they abide living branches in him, through that sap and vertue they dayly receive from him, they are made able to bring forth fruits well pleasing to God, whereby he is glorified. For though God the Father accepts us in Christ, and for his Sake, yet is the New-Birth the indispensable Qualification, and true distinguishing Mark of those that are really in him. He that is in Christ is a new Creature, *Old things are past away, behold all things are become New.* John says, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also, so to walk even as he walked.* We ascribe nothing to Man, as having any power or ability in or of himself to please God, but attribute all power to do that which is good to Christ alone, in whom only the Father is well pleased. 'Tis through him that men so love and fear God as to eschew evil, and work that Righteousness which is acceptable to him; upon whom therefore Man's dependance ought to be daily, to receive from him such sutable supplies, as through a constant watchfulness may enable

enable them so to walk, as to continue in his favour and enjoy his smiles: For 'tis not as two many seems either to imagine, or would gladly have it to be, that they may live in sin and disobedience here, and indulge their corrupt inclinations; and yet hereafter have Christ's Righteousness imputed to them: For though we are not under the *Mosaical Law*, so as to be obliged to it's Ordinances, diverse Washings, and *Levitical Priesthood*, Christ our High-Priest having offer'd up himself once for all, and abolish't it; yet are we not so under grace, as to be discharged from living well, though we are not tyed to its Rites and Ceremonies, yet are we obliged to fulfil its Righteousness, which Christ came not to destroy but to establish: For though God be gracious and merciful to forgive us our Trespases through the mediation of Christ, upon our true and hearty repentance, and turning from them; yet 'tis not that we should take a liberty to go on in sin and Rebellion against him. We are not to sin because he is gracious, that his grace may abound; if so, Where is the straitness of this way? If this be to take up a daily Cross to our own Wills that we may perform his, Pray where is the liberty of the flesh? Those that are virtually in Christ, which renders us acceptable to the Father, and completely espoused to him, must needs have resigned their Wills, as an effect of true love, and requisite to so strict a union, opposite Wills being inconsistent therewith, whence Obedience necessarily follows. The Apostle *John*, after having signified that that God is Light, and that those that would know the blood of cleansing, and true fellowship with him, and one another, ought to walk in the Light as he is in the Light, tells the young and weak in the Faith, whom he calls Children, that he writ those things that they should

1 Pet. 4.
18.

Mat. 5.
20.

Ro. 3. 31.
& 8. 3. 4.

Isa. 55. 7.

Ro. 6. 1, 2.

1 Joh. 1.
5, 7.

1 Joh. 2.
and first
6 Verses.

should not sin; but yet if any through weakness or inadvertency should sin, and so fall under the Father's displeasure, he tells them that Christ the Righteous is both a Propitiation and also an Advocate that interceeds with the Father; and that their keeping his Commands was the surest evidence of their knowing and being in him; but of the strong, whom therefore he calls young men, he says, *That the word of God abode in them, and that they had overcome the evil one.*

Joh. 14.
21, 23.

These things may soon be spoken and comprehended in the Understanding, but to experience them fulfill'd in ourselves, is our highest interest, and only can make us sharers in them. The essence of Christianity and happiness of Christians, don't consist in having our heads stuff with knowledge, only to lodge there and feed upon it, but to have our hearts filled with divine love, which animates us to diligence, and inspires us with courage and vigour to observe and perform the Will of God who looks not at what People profess only, or by what Name they are call'd, but regards the heart, and what principle governs there: People may make a profession of the best things; and yet continue alive to themselves, they may alter Opinion or Perswasion, and yet not turn from Darknels to light, from the power of Satan to God. There hath not been wanting a very large and splendid Profession of Christianity, adorned with curious, elaborate, and elevated Notions, polish'd with Rhetorick and Oratory; but that power and life that reaches the heart, and gives victory and dominion over its lusts and affections, which war against the Soul, is that which too many are yet strangers to; when yet to know our lapsed souls restored from their first fallen state in *Adam*, and raised to a station where we may both perceive the things of God, and receive power to
work

work his Will, to know our minds redeemed, and that power vanquish'd which led us captive, and we leaven'd by the Heavenly gift, into its own nature; as 'tis the very life and marrow of that Religion, about whose exterior parts the world is filled with Noise; so 'tis the proper and most concerning-business of our lives, to find this great salvation accomplish'd in us; the experimental working out whereof in the heart, by the saving grace and Spirit of God, that is given to man to profit with, will yield more satisfaction and true contentment to that soul that sincerely seeks the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof, in whom 'tis begun and carrying on, than to hear or read all their days of what God hath done through all Ages, for those that truly love and fear him; for want of which 'tis that the profession of Christianity is generally so empty and barren in producing a real pious life, attended with the fruits of the spirit, and due Obedience proceeding from the birth of the spirit, without which the most refined methods of Worship and Devotion will not recommend us to God, who is inaccessible *by the birth of the Flesh*: Nor do we believe that 'tis acceptable to God for People to sing before him those Songs and Psalms, that were the experiences and Spiritual exercises of holy men in times past, without having some living experience of the same things in themselves; or that People can properly and truly speak more or farther of the things of God, than what they have known and experienced. Where amongst all these sound Gospel-Spiritual-Truths, is lodg'd that latent Venome so much fear'd and talk't of by our Adversaries, that is so dangerously contagious, and apt to infect the minds of those that shall incline to converse with Us, or our Books, touching our Belief in these necessary Points of
 Chri-

Gal. 6:
3, 4.

As said
Tho. Vincent.

* T. R's
unfavorable
& uncharitable
expression.

Joh. 3. 15,
16.
Act. 10. 43
1 Cor. 12.
7.

Joh. 14.
16, 17, 26.
& 16. 13.
Tit. 2. 11,
12.

Christianity ; Which of them is it, that being imbibed, is more mortal and Destructive to the soul, and defiles it more than drinking a draught of Poyson, or going to a Bawdy-house ; Where are those Damnable Opinions and Heresies wherewith you have been terrified ; Which of them is it, that being persisted in, does necessarily lead to Damnation, and for which the * *Devil must needs carry us a pick-pack to Hell ?* Is it in that we hold-forth the infinite Love of God to mankind, in not only freely of his meer grace and Favour, providing a Sacrifice, thro' which an Atonement is made for the past Transgressions of man, who was never at all in any capacity to make any for himself, which is applicable to every one who shall believe, repent and return ; but hath also afforded to all the means of Faith, Repentance and Conversion, for God requires not impossibilities of men, but expects they should improve those talents Distributed to them, in not only sending forth the Son of his love to dye for their sins, that they should not longer live therein, but also in sending forth his Light and Spirit of Truth into their hearts, to lead and guide them into all Truth, and causing his Grace that brings salvation, to appear to all men, to instruct and teach them to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, to forsake the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this Wicked World, to rescue and save them from living in the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and help and strengthen them to return to their Obedience, and live a sober, righteous and godly Life, to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of their Lives.

Which gift from God to man the Holy Scriptures plentifully testify to, under various Denominations, as Spirit, Light, Word, Grace, Seed,

Seed, Leaven, Anointing, &c. By all which we understand that Spirit or Heavenly Talent with which God hath endowed Mankind in some degree or other that he may Profit with it; in the improvement whereof by a diligent Co-working therewith, to the answering those holy ends for which we receive it, we doubt not but to be happy in rendering a good account of our Stewardship, and entering finally into the Joy of our Lord. Our opposers themselves also pretend to the Spirit and grace of God, or else what means their praying for its assistance, and those plausible fine-spun Discourses of it, wherewith they sometimes entertain their Auditory: We Charitably hope 'tis more real, than only to beautify and recommend them to the hearers, as what they cannot well avoid, for that the Scriptures are so full of that Language, and if indeed it be real, why is that a fault and error in us which is so sound and ornamental in them; And we think it very strange that they should apprehend any incongruity in granting this Divine Principle to be a Divine Light to the mind; since its proper Office is to teach and instruct, to manifest and point to us our Duty, as well as to dispose and enable us to perform it; and ought to be our leader and governor. If the godly admonitions, and exemplary lives of good men were rightly called lights to the world, surely much more properly may this, whose fountain is light and does more nearly illuminate and inform the understanding, and renders those effectual, justly challenge that necessary, and acceptable appellation. If then the Grace and Spirit of God be in the hearts of men, surely 'tis not wholly unactive there, but will be making some attempts towards accomplishing the end for which 'tis placed there; 'twill be at times attacking the enemies, and endeavouring to sup-

Mat. 25.
14, 15.

Tit. 2. 11,
12.
Joh. 14.
17, 24.
& 16. 7,
8. 13, 14.
1 Joh. 2,
27.

As said
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Joh. 3. 15,
16.

Act. 10. 43
1 Cor. 12.
7.

Joh. 14.
16, 17, 26.
& 16. 13.
Tit. 2. 11,
12.

Christianity ; Which of them is it, that being imbibed, is more mortal and Destructive to the soul, and defiles it more than drinking a draught of Poyson, or going to a Bawdy-house ; Where are those Damnable Opinions and Heresies where-with you have been terrified ; Which of them is it, that being persisted in, does necessarily lead to Damnation, and for which the * *Devil must needs carry us a pick-pack to Hell ?* Is it in that we hold-forth the infinite Love of God to mankind, in not only freely of his meer grace and Favour, providing a Sacrifice, thro' which an Atonement is made for the past Transgressions of man, who was never at all in any capacity to make any for himself, which is applicable to every one who shall believe, repent and return ; but hath also afforded to all the means of Faith, Repentance and Conversion, for God requires not impossibilities of men, but expects they should improve those talents Distributed to them, in not only sending forth the Son of his love to dye for their sins, that they should not longer live therein, but also in sending forth his Light and Spirit of Truth into their hearts, to lead and guide them into all Truth, and causing his Grace that brings salvation, to appear to all men, to instruct and teach them to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, to forsake the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this Wicked World, to rescue and save them from living in the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and help and strengthen them to return to their Obedience, and live a sober, righteous and godly Life, to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of their Lives.

Which gift from God to man the Holy Scriptures plentifully testify to, under various Denominations, as Spirit, Light, Word, Grace, Seed,

Seed, Leaven, Anointing, &c. By all which we understand that Spirit or Heavenly Talent with which God hath endowed Mankind in some degree or other that he may Profit with it; in the improvement whereof by a diligent Co-working therewith, to the answering those holy ends for which we receive it, we doubt not but to be happy in rendering a good account of our Stewardship, and entering finally into the Joy of our Lord. Our opposers themselves also pretend to the Spirit and grace of God, or else what means their praying for its assistance, and those plausible fine-spun Discourses of it, wherewith they sometimes entertain their Auditory: We Charitably hope 'tis more real, than only to beautify and recommend them to the hearers, as what they cannot well avoid, for that the Scriptures are so full of that Language, and if indeed it be real, why is that a fault and error in us which is so sound and ornamental in them; And we think it very strange that they should apprehend any incongruity in granting this Divine Principle to be a Divine Light to the mind; since its proper Office is to teach and instruct, to manifest and point to us our Duty, as well as to dispose and enable us to perform it; and ought to be our leader and governor. If the godly admonitions, and exemplary lives of good men were rightly called lights to the world, surely much more properly may this, whose fountain is light and does more nearly illuminate and inform the understanding, and renders those effectual, justly challenge that necessary, and acceptable appellation. If then the Grace and Spirit of God be in the hearts of men, surely 'tis not wholly unactive there, but will be making some attempts towards accomplishing the end for which 'tis placed there; 'twill be at times attacking the enemies, and endeavouring to sup-

B .

plant:

Mat. 25.
14, 15.Tit. 2. 11,
12.
Joh. 14.
17, 24.
& 16. 7,
8. 13, 14.
1 Joh. 2:
27.

Joh. 3.
20, 21.
Ephes. 5.
13.

Joh. 16.
8, 13.

Prov. 14.
13.

plant its contrary, which being holy and pure in its nature is never reconcilable to sin and evil, but ever strives against it, and may, as men, regard it, be infallibly known by the nature of its efforts. And we dare appeal even to all mankind, whether they find not something placed in their minds and Consciences, which though perhaps not regent there, yet never mingles with, nor Consents to their evil deeds, but always remains undefiled, and testifies against them, and convicts, reproveth; and condemns them for it, and also oft-times in the cooler temper of their spirit manifests their states to them, and as 'twere reasons with them, Discovering the evil of their ways secretly calling to them to come out of it, begetting desires and inclinations, sometimes to seek after God, and to make their peace with him. Now since man in his meer natural State, is Totally dead and fallen from God, that he cannot as of himself think a good thought; and that God only is essentially good, and as that which is truly, so must needs proceed from him; this Principle in us that ever convicts us for vice and evil, whether in thought, word or deed, and disposeth us to consider of our latter end, and oft makes men sigh in the midst of laughter, reminding them, that for those things they must give an account, that draws us heaven-ward, and inclines us to vertue and goodness, to do to all men as we would be done unto, to be just, Sober, merciful, temperate, &c. Must needs be something that is not of us, but is pure and immaculate, and of a Divine nature, ever *aspiring* and raising the Mind towards its Original.

Whence it cannot be a Natural Light or meer light of Nature, as very many would have it, who yet talk of the Spirit of God being in Man, for 'tis an undoubted truth, that no agent can
act

act beyond its own sphere, and raise its object to a state more noble than it self, nor produce effects of a nature more sublime than its own Original. Besides 'tis very clear and evident from Scripture, that the mind of Man is oft lighted by a light Superiour to that of meer reason, and that man by the utmost Power and extent of human reason and speculation, (though he may arrive to implicit knowledge that there is a God, yet) can never attain to a true, spiritual and saving knowledge of God, without the Concurrence of a Divine and supernatural Agent; for though the mind of man as a rational Being, be that Capacity or Candle that is to be Lighted, yet 'tis Christ that must so enlighten it, as to give us a true discerning of those things, that appertain to him and his Kingdom, and by adhering and yeilding obedience to its discoveries, we shall know an Accession of more Light. And the Apostle speaking of what God by his spirit had revealed to them, saith expressly, that the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and that as none knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, so the things of God knows no man but the spirit of God: That the natural man neither knoweth nor receiveth the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned, and to that end they had received the spirit which is of God. The Light of Nature is occupied about natural Objects, those things that are within its own Region, acting within its own Proper Orb, but reaches not to that knowledge of God which is life eternal, except our natural powers or human capacity be illuminated by the rays of divine light, for the world by human wisdom knows not God. And Christ saith very plainly and positively, that none knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him,

Job 21.
17.
Psal. 18.
28.

Ro. 1. 19.
2 Cor. 4.
6.
Prov. 20.
27.
Luk. 24.
45.
Joh. 1. 9.
Ephes. 5.
13. 14. 17.
Psal 36. 9.
Prov. 4.
18.
1 Cor. 2.
10. to the
end.

1 Cor 1.
20.

Mat. 11.
27.

Mark. 3.

24. 27.

Luk. 11. 21.

That these struglings in us should be the suggestions of Satan, that he should disquiet and disturb People for their Sins, for serving him, and put them upon endeavouring to be freed from their vassalage under his power, were absurd to imagine; no, our Saviour puts that beyond a question, when he asks, Can a Kingdom divided against it self stand? And by and by saith plainly that whilst the strong Man arm'd keep the house his goods are at peace, 'til a stronger than he comes to bind him, &c. So that 'tis clear it's not the devil, but the approaches of a superiour power that breaks the peace of People for sin, and that follows and condemns them for Disobedience and Transgression, and is the same that would and only can redeem their minds out of that miserable state, and bind that strong man, and break his power and cast him out, would they but joyn thereto, and accept of deliverance by it.

1 Cor. 12.

7.

Nor does its being Extended to all men, through all Ages from their youth upwards, bespeak it to be therefore natural or contemptible, but on the contrary, of the greater moment to all men; for besides that the Apostle saith a manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal, the blessings and gifts of God are free and valuable from their intrinsic worth; God in nature ordain'd nothing in vain, but by how much any thing is of the greatest use to us, for sustaining and accommodating our natural life, the more common it is, as the Sun that gives Light to all through all Ages, &c. 'Tis we fondly rate things according to our fancies, and esteem and prize them more for their rarity and curiosity, than usefulness; but God bestows most universally that which is of the absolute necessity to man. Are not all men that are born, strangers and enemies to God, in the dark, and at a distance from him in the State of Nature
and

and must therefore be enlightened, converted, and born again, and made spiritual before we can be reconciled to him ; shall not God then, that would have all repent and be saved, cause the Light of the Son of Righteousness to shine upon all, and give a measure of his grace and spirit to all, to assist them in the accomplishment of that in themselves which they cannot do of themselves, and yet is of indispenfible necessity to our Salvation? Wherefore God by his spirit strives with man so long as his day of visitation lasts. Since then our opposers acknowledge the spirit and grace of God, which also is Light to be in Man, unless they can shew it by its manifestly different and superior nature, tendency, and operation, to be contradictory from that we have been speaking of ; we see neither absurdity nor error in concluding it to be one and the same grace and free-gift of God to all, which is always the same in nature, though it differs in degree, and is that Heavenly Treasure, which God hath committed to our trust ; and blessed will they be who rightly employ and improve it, and gives place and room to this seed of the Kingdom in their hearts, where, though it may appear at first contrary to the expectation of man, little, mean and contemptible, scarcely regarded amongst the stuff, wherewith mens minds are filled, yet joyn but to it, that it may exert its power and force, and 'twill grow and increase ; let but this leaven have its perfect work and 'twill leaven the whole lump into its own nature.

Be pleased to consider, whether we have justly merited the invidious invectives of our adversaries, in believing that the Lord searches the heart of man, and shews him his thoughts, that he hath and will remember this latter age of the world, and hath not forgotten to be gracious in performing those bountiful promises made in times past

Jo. 3 3 5.

1 Tim. 2.

3. 4.

2 Pet. 3 9.

Mat. 13.

31. 32.

Mat. 13.

33.

Luk. 13.

21.

Jer. 17. 10.

Ro. 8 27.

Rev. 2. 23

Amos. 4.

Jer. 31. to the off-spring of the Gentiles, in placing his
 33. 34. Law in our Hearts, and putting his truth in our
 Ezek 36. inward parts, in pouring out of his spirit upon
 26, 27. all the Sons and Daughters of men, in becoming
 Joel, 2. our teacher, and giving us the knowledge of him-
 28 29. self, through the Revelation of his Son Jesus
 Acts. 2. 16, Christ, who is come to open our blind eyes, and
 17, 18. to bring us, that were bound in darkness, out of
 Isa. 54. 13. the prison-house, who hath promised to be with
 Mat. 11. 27. his People to the end of the World, in believing
 11a. 42. 7. that God hath sent us the Comforter, the spirit of
 & 61. 1. Truth, to be our Remembrancer, and to guide
 Joh. 14. and direct us in the way of Truth; in attesting
 16, 17, 26. the sufficiency and utility of the Teachings of this
 & 16. 3. Holy Unction sent into our hearts, in believing
 1 Joh. 2. that though Christ be in his Glorified Body in
 20. 27. Heaven, yet that he is present also in the Hearts
 of his People, who is King of Saints, and shall
 Joh. 14. he not then rule in them? The High and Holy
 17, 20, 23. One that inhabits Eternity, hath promised to dwell
 & 17. 23, also with the Humble and contrite, to revive and
 26. comfort them, shall not he, whose Presence fills
 Isa. 57. Heaven and Earth, be present in the Heart of
 15. Man? Shall not he that rejoyleth in the habitable
 2 Cor. 6. parts of the Earth, and delights in the Sons of
 16. Men, reside in his People? Are they not Mem-
 Prov. 8, bers of him, and he their Head? Can there be a
 51. more intimate Union and Communion than be-
 Joh. 15. tween the Head and the Body, the Vine and the
 4. 5. Branches? The same Spirit of Life that is in the
 1 Cor, Head, is the Life of the Body also, and acts it; he
 6 15, 17, that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit, doth not
 19. the Life that is in the Root pass to the Branches,
 also, and preserves them living? Are not all dead
 Branches, in whom this life is not? Whosoever hath
 the Son of God, and feeds on him, hath life by him;
 Joh. 6. and those that have not Christ, who is the Life of
 56, 57. his Saints, hath not Life: How could his People
 1 Joh. 5. in all Ages Partake of him, if he were not present
 13. in

them? Surely this Doctrine doth not deserve to be scofft, but is most comfortable to those who are sick of Love, and thirst ardently after the Enjoyment [not Hear-say] of him.

Ro. 10. 6.
7. 8.
2 Cor. 13.
5.
Col. 2. 20:

Consider seriously these things which are agreeable to Scripture, and with what reason People have derided us for our Belief herein; terming it the Quakers Christ, as though his manifesting himself in our Hearts were another, or distinct from Jesus Christ of *Nazareth*, that is glorified with God the Father in Heaven, which we deny; For though he be ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, far above all Principalities and Powers; yet is not he so circumscribed, but that (as by him all things were made and created) he is the life and filleth all in all in his Church and People. Is the Divinity and Humanity of Christ divided? Is not their inseparable Union the true and intire Christ? Can then his God-head be present, and he who is the Heavenly Man be absent? What think you of him that appear'd to *John*, and gave him his Commission to the Seven Churches? whom he describes, *Rev. ch. i.* who saith, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.* The same saith, *I am he which searches the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works:* Was not this the true Christ the Mediator, by whom God will Judge the World? And can he make this near Inspection into the innermost part of the Minds of Men, so as no Thought can escape his notice, if he be not present there? What made *Paul* desire that our Lord Jesus Christ might be with *Timothy's* Spirit, if he thought it impossible? Do not all acknowledge the Spirit of Christ, who is the Anointed, to be in his People, and is he then absent? Is its being

Col. 1. 16.
Eph. 1. 23
& 3. 9.

Rev. 3. 20.
& 2. 23.

Acts 17. 31.
Rom. 2. 16.
John 1. 16.

1 John 4.
13.

1 Cor. 13.
9. 12.

a Mystery, far beyond our comprehension to conceive how it can be a sufficient Argument that therefore 'tis not so? Ought we not in such cases to exercise Faith? and acquiesce in the Testimony of the Holy Ghost, exprest in the Sacred Scriptures, rather than Interpose with our nice and curious Subtilities? prying unnecessarily into things that are too high for us; remembering that Secret Things belongs to God; and that those that know most here, know only in part the things that are invisible; and see them but as through a Glass. Shall Men that neither know themselves, nor have any intuitive knowledge of the Essences, even of the meanest things, where-with Nature every-where presents us, which are obvious to our Senses; yet aspire to those more abstruce, and undertake to account for that which is beyond the reach of the most pregnant Wits to penetrate.

Gen. 3. 15.

1 Thes. 5.
63.

We hope it's no Error to avouch the Power of Christ to be stronger than that of the Devil, that he is able really to bind him, to bruise his Head, and break his Power, to dispossess and cast him out, to fulfil to the uttermost the end of his coming, to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to save those from their Sins who shall have true faith in his Name and Power: Surely it's not inconsistent with Christianity to believe that Christ can, or will, thoroughly purge his Floor; that he can indeed deliver out of the Prison-house, and restore Man out of the Fall to God again, and give him Power to forsake the Devil and all his Works, &c.

Rom. 6. 6,
7, 11.
2 Pet. 1. 4.

We find it consonant to Scripture, and the Gospel-dispensation, to believe that those who are regenerated and born again of the Spirit, have through the spirit mortified the first carnal corrupt Nature, which cannot please God, and if dead,

dead, and slain, and buried too, surely then it no longer lives, but the mind is at liberty, and restored to act in a new Life, to walk after the Spirit, and fulfil the Righteousness of the Law; the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, having set them free from the Law of Sin, and Death which is it's Wages. 'Tis for want of Peoples experiencing this real Birth of the Spirit brought forth, and knowing Freedom in themselves by it, which no Duties or Performances in the Will of Man, nor entertaining of the most refined Opinions in Religion can administer, short of the Law of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; 'tis for want of this, that People are so very apprehensive, of Difficulty, even to impossibility, of living a Holy Righteous Life; which yet is so necessary to our Salvation, that without it we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor see God: Nor is the way broader, or its Passage less strait and difficult than they imagine; nay, 'tis absolutely impossible for them to walk therein, while they are immerc'd in their first corrupt unbridled Nature, which cannot keep the Law of God, while their Lusts and Passions are rampant, their affections inordinate, and Wills unsubjected, and follows the desires and evil inclinations of their Minds without restraint. But if they come to know another Principle and Power to govern their minds, to create in them new clean Hearts, to regulate and subject their Wills, to subdue and tame their Passions, to limit their Desires, and direct their affections and Inclinations wholly after that which is good, to meliorate their Spirits throughout, and make them heavenly minded, having an aversion to all Evil, and a great love to Vertue and goodness: Being thus perfectly transformed, where is the extream difficulty now, for the good Man, out of the good treasure of his Heart,

Eph. c. 4.
 v. 22, 23,
 24.
 Colos. c. 3.
 v. 9, 10.

Rom. 8. 2,
 4.

Mat. 5. 20.
 Heb. 12.
 14.

Mat. 12.
 35.

- Heart, to bring forth good things? Will not this new well-inclin'd inside, that now detests Evil, and loves and delights in Righteousness, as naturally follow after, and bring forth that which is good, as before he did Evil? Here is no force upon Peoples Natures, but they are converted, and throughly leavened in another Nature, and are in their measures Partakers of the Divine Nature, which only can Work the Will of God. We request our piously inclined Neighbours, well and seriously to weigh and consider, the absolute necessity there is for every True Christian thus to know; their minds moulded and fashioned a-new by the Power and Spirit of Christ, working mightily in them, in order to their pleasing God by a Holy Righteous Life, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust; and considering that 'tis not so soon attained, as apprehended in the understanding to be necessary: That with all diligence they address themselves to the performing that which is the main and proper business of our Lives. Wherefore as it hath pleased the Divine Power to give us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness, so let us with a vigilant attention to, and co-working with that grace, which to that end is given, work out our Salvation with a reverend fear; since a good degree of attainment herein is soon lost, except there be a constant sedulous watchfulness upon the mind amidst all business and concerns, to have a check upon our words and thoughts, and a diligent pressing forward: For while we live in this World we are liable to temptations, and may enter thereinto also, without a strict care and watchfulness; our Senses presenting many baits to our minds on every hand which Satan makes use of to beguile, and many Provocations, offer themselves in our Pilgrimage; against all which God's Grace is
1. Pet. 2.
Col. 1. 13.
2 Pet. 1. 3.
Tit. 2. 11,
12.
Phil. 2. 12,
13.
Mat. 26.
41.
2 Cor. 12.
9.
- suf-

ficient Armour ; as our minds are seasoned by it, so that where any shortness is, 'tis through insincerity, Negligence, or Inadvertency.

Or is it a dangerous heinous Heresie that we with very many Professors of Christianity, believe the Universality of the Love of God to all Mankind ; Pl. 145. 9. that God who is good to all, whose Mercies extends to all the Works of his Hands ; is sincere in his Intention, and Attestation thereof, and doth not design to delude us, when he affirms, That as certainly as he lives he desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would return and live ; that God, whose Love and mercy is unlimited, doth graciously and generously offer Salvation, through Jesus Christ, (upon certain conditions to be performed on our part) to all Mankind, to every individual Man and Woman upon the face of the Earth, which is the true Gospel-message, good Tydings of great Joy, which shall be to all People, Peace on Earth, and good will towards Men ; good cause indeed to rejoyce, that all are within the verge of Mercy and free Pardon ; that God is indeed no Respector of Persons, but among all Nations and People, he or she that fears him, and works Righteousness is of him accepted ; and that Christ dyed for the sins of the whole World, yea, for every Man ; surely then all for whom he dyed are thereby put into capacity for Salvation ; that saving grace hath appeared to all Men, and manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal. And that none are reprobated, but those that continue to be deaf to the Calls of this grace, and resist the Spirit, and hides and neglects their Talents 'til the day of their Visitation be over ; and Christ so withdraws himself, as to cease longer to strive with them ; so that the means being taken away, they are left to themselves, and given up to Hard-
ness

Ezek. 33-
11. & 18.
23.

John c. 3.
v. 14, 15,
16, 17.
Isai. 55. 1.
Rev. 22.
17.

Rom. 5. 18.
Luke 2.
10, 14.
Isa. 55. 7.
Ezek. c.
18. v. 21,
22, to the
end.

Acts 10.
34, 35.
1 Joh. 2. 2.
Heb. 2. 9.
Tit. 2. 11.

1 Cor. 12.

7
See Pro. c.
1. from v.
20. to the
end.

Mat. 23.
37.

Neh 9. 20.
25.

Isa. 63. 10. ness of Heart ; that being absent that should pre-
 Psal. 81. v. pare, tender, and mollifie it, that now they can-
 11, 12, 13. not Repent, Believe, and be Converted.

If thus to believe be a dangerous and pernicious Errour, we confess we are Guilty, and not like to be otherwise ; for we cannot perswade ourselves to embrace that Anti-evangelical Opinion, That God from all Eternity hath personally and conditionally, without respect to their accepting or rejecting the Salvation offer'd in Christ, elected some and reprobated others by an immutable Decree, so that those who are so elected shall certainly be saved, let them do what they will, for God's Decree, can't be revers'd, let the unstable Mind of Man vary as it will : and those that are reprobated were in effect damned thousands of Years before they were born, so that their Salvation is put beyond all hope, let them seek it never so earnestly and diligently, and be never so desirous to serve and please God. For besides, that this sad Tidings instead of glad Tidings, if it were really true in itself, puts an end to the whole business of Religion, by rendering all Worship and Devotion, all Preaching, Praying, Assembling together, and Holy Living as 'twere useless, by invalidating all whatsoever on Man's part, as nothing contributing (as a necessary Condition on his part to be performed or neglected) towards his salvation or eternal Destruction. We dare not take up an Opinion so diametrically opposite to the very Attributes of God, and his repeated Protestations to the Contrary, and with some Men thus presume to arraign his Justice, Mercy and Goodness ; we cannot believe that God who is Love itself, and Goodness itself, and hath always manifested a wonderful Care and Concern for Man as his darling Creature, it being disagreeable to his Power, to condemn those that have

not

Wis. 12.
 15, 16.

deserved to be punished, and having no pleasure in the death of him that dies, should yet make the major part of Mankind, with design to damn them, unprovok'd thereto, without ever tendering them Salvation; or that he would make the far greater number wholly incapable of accepting the salvation tendred them, by putting it out of their power to perform those Conditions and terms, upon which he offers it, and then condemn them to eternal Misery for not complying with those Conditions that 'twas impossible for them to observe: For He don't only call to all the ends of the Earth (which implies all Mankind) to look to him and be saved, but he hath given to every one a Portion of his Spirit to enable them so to do, he hath not only sent forth the Son of his Love to shed his Blood for every Man, to be lifted up as *Moses* lifted up the Brazen Serpent, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish; but he also draws them, and as they will receive it, toucheth them with that Divine Magnet that only can incline and impower them effectually to turn to that Pole in which all our true Happiness centers.

Ezek. 18.
22.
Wis. 11.
23, 24.

Isai. 45.
22.

Joh. 3. 14.
15, 16.

Joh. 6. 44.
45.

But this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; and hates the light, and will not bring their deeds to it, lest it should reprove them; for whatsoever is reproveable is made manifest by the light, but men love their own broad ways, to pursue the sight of their eyes and desire of their minds, and therefore hate to be control'd therein, and reform'd. The Apostle stirring up the *Ephesians* to Purity of Life, and to avoid several Evils there mentioned, saith expressly, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of those things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience.* And in another place, *That those who live after the flesh die.* So

Joh. 3. 19,
20.
Eph. 5 13.

Ecc. 11. 9.

Eph. 5 6,
7.

Rom. 8.
13.

that

Prov. 6.

23.

Gal. 6. 8.

1 Tim. 2.

3. 4.

Rev. 3. 20.

Luk. 16.

41, 42.

Matth. 23.

37.

that 'tis for want of Peoples embracing the Means; and bringing their Deeds to the Light of Christ in their Hearts, and heeding the Reproofs of Instruction, which is the Way of Life, for want of sowing to the Spirit, and by it mortifying the Deeds of the Flesh, that People are lost and sentenced to Perdition, and not because they were personally and unconditionally reprobated from all Eternity. God who is Lord of all, is gracious unto all, and would have all Men to be saved; but they disobey the Call of God, and reject his offers, and resist the Strivings, of his Spirit, and are deaf to those Knocks of our Saviour for Reception and Entertainment in their Hearts, and chuse and prefer the Present World. and will not deny themselves to follow Christ. 'Tis not as these Men say, because Salvation was never within their reach: If 'twere not, what must we think; Were those feigned Tears then that our Saviour shed over *Jerusalem*, When the Day of its Visitation was over? Saying also, *How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her chickens, but you would not; not you could not.*

If any Men can be so hardy as to entertain an Opinion so derogatory to the Justice, Mercy, Love, and Paternal Care of God, and repugnant to the Gospel-message, we cannot but admire what should induce them to obtrude it upon others, and urge it at though 'twas a necessary point to be believed in the Christian Religion; for we cannot apprehend how this begets Love to God, increaseth Faith in Christ, and raiseth our Veneration for him, excites to Diligence, and encourages Piety, which is that which advanceth true religion; but on the contrary, that it tends to the indulging some in a Security, and procure in others a slight Esteem of the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, as being partial, and casts them into Despond, and probably
may

may encourage both to gratify the Desires of their Minds to the full extent, since nothing can alter such a supposed Decree of God one way or the other: Yet we deny not the Prescience of God, who fore-knows all things, things past, present, and to come, being at once present to him; so that it may be said, such who believe in Christ with that living active Faith that works by Love, and excites to Obedience, and persevere therein unto the end, and so knows Salvation by him, are in him in whom the Election is before the World began; and that those who so believe not, but reject the Tenders of his Love, and by persisting in Disobedience, neglects so great Salvation, are condemned already. Nor do we deny such a Perference as that some are made Stewards over more, and some fewer Talents, according to which their Improvement ought to be: Where much is given much is required, and where less is given less is required; for God is just and equal in all his Ways, he is not a hard Master, that he should exact or expect more than the Improvement of his own: Had he that received but one Talent, imploy'd it, and made it two, we doubt not but it had been accepted; for we believe that none are from Eternity absolutely excluded without any Talent, and that a Day also is afforded wherein 'tis possible for them to improve it. So that though the Grace may work more powerfully in some than in others, yet are all left without Excuse.

Mat. 25.
14, to the
28.

There is yet another Opinion dependant on this, which we cannot receive neither, as they state it, for which our Opposers think very ill of us; that is, once in a state of Grace and ever so; that there is no Total or final falling away from Grace. How this Doctrine promotes true Zeal and Piety, and improves Christianity, we can't

un-

understanding, nor see no other reason why its Votaries should be so fond of it, but because 'tis concordant to that of Personal Election and Reprobation ; so that those who imbrace the one, are bound to believe the other : But otherwise, certainly it tends rather to slacken than Spur on People to that care and diligence, and constant unwearied watchfulness to Prayer, which our Lord so much exhorted to, and the Apostles so solicitously presses the Saints every where to be found in, as of absolute necessity. What else means those Promises of Reward in the *Revelations*, to those who should overcome and hold out to the end, but to ingage them to a constant Perseverance ? Or what needed it, if 'twere impossible for them to fall short ; who I suppose none will deny to have been in a state of Grace ? And the Church of *Ephesus* was threatened to have their Candlestick removed, if they repented not, and did their first works ; and that of *Laodicea* to be spewed out of his Mouth. Who can say those foolish Virgins in the Parable were not once in a state of Grace, whose Lamps were once lighted and burning, as well as trimm'd, or else they could not properly be said to be gone out ; Or that those were not called by Saving Grace, in whose Hearts the Heavenly Seed sprung up, and for a time Prosper'd 'til the Bryars and Thorns, the over-care and concern about the things of this Life, choak'd it ; 'twas not that they had no day of Visitation from God, wherein they might have wrought out their Salvation, had they continued to make the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteousness, their first and chiefest Choice, and placed their treasure there, and disentangled themselves from those unnecessary Cares ; the Seed that was sown and sprung up, was the very same with that which in the honest heart brought forth fruit abundantly. Sure-

Rev. 2. 5.
3. 16.

Mat. 25. 8.
Luk. c. 8
v. 7, 8, 14,
15.

Surely *Paul* that Great Apostle was not of these mens Opinion, when after he had long Laboured in the Gospel, takes care to keep under his, Body, least while he Preach'd to others he himself should be Cast-away, whom yet we doubt not, but they will grant was then effectually called, and in a state of Grace. And the Author to the *Hebrews* writing in the third Chapter, to those he calls holy Bretheren, and Partakers of the Heavenly Calling, Verse the 12th, exhorts them to take heed lest there was in any of them an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the Living God. And again, Chap. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering his rest*, (Surely then not eternally reprobated) *any of you should seem to come short of it.* Verse 12. *Let us Labour therefore to enter that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.* Again Chap. 6. Verses 4, 5, 6. speaking of those who had been enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and that had tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, (shew'd signs that they were effectually call'd, and in a state of grace) that if they should fall away 'twould be impossible to renew them again to Repentance; not because they were eternally reprobated, but because they crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, because they grieved his good Spirit, and rejected the Means: Hath not the Lord said, *Ezek. 18.* If a righteous man turns from his righteousness, *24. 26.* he shall die: Who can be righteous without the *and c. 33.* assistance of God's Grace? No Man can make *v. 58.* himself so; 'tis not in Man to direct his own Ways; and yet it seems, 'tis Possible for him to fall from it, after he hath lived so long under its conduct as by it to be made righteous, and one would think should then be sanctified too. Our

John 15. Saviour saith of himself, *I am the true vine, ye are*
 1, 2, 5, 6. *the branches; my Father is the husband-man, every*
branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.
 Again, *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth*
as a branch and is withered. Surely those who are
 Branches in Christ, while so, are accepted of the
 Father; and yet it seems 'tis possible for them to
 fall away and be cut off as withered Branches;
 whence he often repeats this Condition, if ye abide
 John 15. in me; and presently he saith, the way to continue
 10. in his Love was to do his Will, as he had that of his
 Father's, and continued in his Love. But though
 we cannot embrace their Opinion, for their Rea-
 sons, and as they state it, but that 'tis possible
 for People to make a considerable Progress in
 Grace, and yet for want of a careful and constant
 Watchfulness to that Grace they may fall away:
 Yet we believe such a State and growth in Grace
 through a vigilant Attention thereto, and such a
 degree of Faith attainable, as that there is no more
 going forth.

But that which seems to be our capital Error,
 and the top of all their Charge, and that which is
 to silence all Peal's in our behalf, is our omitting
 the use of the Ordinances (so called) of Baptism
 and Bread, and Wine. *John* indeed as the next
 immediate Fore-runner of Christ to prepare his
 Way, gave an Alarm to the *Jews* that were so
 Mat 3. 2. secure under the Law of *Moses*, and proclaim'd
 Act. 17. 30. the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, and the time
 come wherein, God Commanded the *Jews*, as well as
 others every-where to repent; 'twas not sufficient
 for them to go on in sinning, and then offer those
 respective Sacrifices which the Law enjoyn'd them
 Rom. 1. for the same, but now the Wrath of God was near
 18. to be reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness
 and Unrighteousness of Men: 'twas not sufficient
 to deck and make clean the outside of the Cup
 and

and Platter, but the inside was to be clean'd, and then the outside would be clean also. The Axe was now laid to the root; and every Tree that brought not forth good Fruit was to be hewn down. The Law of *Moses* took hold on exterior Acts and could not make perfect as pertaining to the Conscience, but now that Dispensation was about to be established that comes nearer home, and takes cognizance of the very Thoughts, that Sin be not so much as conceived by the Will's joyning thereto. Wherefore *John* was sent to administer the Baptism of Repentance as a lively Figure of that which was presently after to follow; for *John's* Baptism was not capable to produce this Effect upon the Mind: and he himself testifies, *That though he baptized them with water, yet he that came after him, that was before him, and more Honourable than he, should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, that his fan was in his hand, and that 'twas he should thoroughly purge his floor.* Which is the great Work that is to be done under his Gospel-dispensation, to take away the Sins of the World, and destroy the Works of the Devil, to purifie Peoples Hearts. and make them spiritually minded; this is the proper Effects of Christ's lasting Baptism, not the washing away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God, to purge our Consciences from dead Works, to serve the Living God in Newness of Life. The Baptism of Christ is but one, and those who by it are baptized into Jesus Christ, are baptized into his Death, and their old Man crucified with him, that the Body of Sin may be destroyed, and they no longer serve Sin, because they that are dead with Christ are freed from Sin, and made alive to God, to live a holy Righteous Life: These are the blessed Effects of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, and Benefits that re-

Mat. 23.
25, 26.
and c. 3.
10.

Heb. 9. 9.
2 Cor. 10.
5.
James 2.
15.

Matt. c. 3.
v. 11, 12.

1 John 3.
8.

1 Pet 3.
21.

Ephes. 4.
5.
Rom 6. 3.
and. v. 6,
7, 8, 11.

- Zech. 13.** dound to those who are in truth washed by Christ
1. in that holy Laver which entitles us to a part in
 him; 'tis our cheifest Concern to know this in-
 ward spiritual Baptism of Christ, that our Hearts
1 Cor. 6. may be washed, purified, and sanctified by the
11. Spirit of God; and that we really put on
 Christ, and are in him who is the Substance, in
 whom the Types ended. *John* knew and foretold
 himself that he must decrease, but Christ must in-
 crease; he doth not say, I shall cease presently at
 once, so soon as Christ's Baptism takes place; but
 I must decrease, but were Water-baptism to continue
 always amongst Christians, then would not *John*
 decrease: Nor will it solve this Allegation, that
 'twas abolisht as *John's*, and instituted a-new as
 Christ's, for then hath Christ his different Gospel-
 baptisms, which is erronious.

We grant that some of the Apostles did use
 Water-baptism for a time, but we believe 'twas
 rather in compliance with the Circumstances of
 Time than of necessity, and in condescension to
 the Weakness of Believers in the very Infancy of
 the Church, and even the same Age wherein *John*
 baptized, who was not only a true Messenger of
 God in his time, but had gained great Credit a-
 mong the People, and his Memory and Message
 could not soon be forgotten; nor was it easie to
 draw them from a Practice that but just before
 was acknowledged to be of Divine Authority:
 For we find the Apostles tolerated the believing
Jews to live in certain Rites and Ceremonies of
 the *Mosaical* Law, notwithstanding the MESSIAH
 was come in the Flesh and abrogated them; so
 difficult 'tis to disengage People from those things
 wherein they have been educated, and to which
 their Minds are once glewed, and some of them
 would have had the believing Gentiles come under
 that Yoak and be circumcised, which *Paul* their
 great

great Apostle withstood, seeing beyond all those Things, knowing that the Kingdom of God was not Meats and Drinks, but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and not in Word but Power, not divers Washings and carnal Ordinances, which were Shadows and to perish, but the Body is of Christ, and those that are in him, are in him compleat, believing that if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing; and yet we see such was his Condescension, that he himself notwithstanding circumcised *Timothy*, and when he was at *Jerusalem* shaved his head, &c. behaving himself as a *Jew*, for the Sakes of those who saw not so far as himself. And notwithstanding he was such a laborious and zealous Publisher of the Gospel, yet we find he baptized but very few, and thanks God that he baptized no more, (surely 'twas not then essential to the Gospel) but saith plainly, That he was not sent to Baptize, but to preach the Gospel, and to turn People from Darknes to Light, from the Power of Satan to God, who had delivered them from the Power of Darknes, and translated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; 'tis this that is of absolute Necessity to our Salvation; he did not then Baptize because some others did it, which yet is as large a Commission as perhaps any pretend to now-a-days. Of which we say as he did of Circumcision (tho' we do not grant 'tis the Seal of the Covenant, and introduced in room of Circumcision as some will have it, but without Scripture-authority) Baptism or no Baptism availeth any thing short of a new Creature, which is the truest Sign of Possessing the inward Spiritual Grace, and of being in Christ, and is beyond all visible Signs whatsoever: The Apostles having thus indulged it, 'tis no Wonder that 'twas continued, and since got footing under the Degeneracy, for as Corruption entred the

Rom. 14.

17.

1. Cor. 4.

20.

Colos. 2 v.

14 & 15,

17, 22, 10.

Heb. 9. 9.

10.

Gal. 5. 2.

Acts. c. 21.

v. 20. to

the 28.

1 Cor. 1.

14.

1 Cor. 1.

17.

Colos. 1.

13.

Church, and was encreased, the Spirit and Life of Christianity was more and more eclipsed, and the Minds of its Professors grew darker, and then adhered more to external Performances; and not only continued that which had been used by their Predecessors, or at least something in its stead, but by Degrees added more Rites and Ceremonies; and at length began to trim and deck that Religion that in itself was plain simple, and homely, and consisted more in Power and Divine Love, than outward Observations; which in Process of Time was so drest and garnisht, that its August Splendour became inviting to others. Under this Degeneracy in Degree sprung up Infant-Baptism, a meer humane Invention, without any Scripture-authority either by Precept or Practice; wherefore for those who do not use Baptism, as 'twas instituted under its proper Dispensation, to upbraid us for neglecting it, is absurd and unreasonable.

2 Tim. 2.
22.

But that which makes the loudest Out-cry of all is our Disuse of the Sacrament, so called of Bread and Wine, 'tis this is that Pestilent mortal Error that in our Opposer's Account, renders us worse than the Papists, whatever 'tis that makes us the Spawn of the Jesuites, which with several others are Epithets, that to be sure were Calculated, tho' unjustly, to render us as odious as may be to the People, and carry a great deal of Rancour in them, and favours of too much Gall, to proceed from the meek Spirit of Christianity, that teacheth to be at Peace with, and have Charity for all that call on the Lord out of a pure heart: But whether upon the whole Matter we deserve this severe bitter Censure, or whether, those that so liberally bestow it upon us, have a just right to cast the first Stone, is what we desire our sober Neighbours to consider, and not judge us also by whole-

wholesale, from an implicit Belief of what others say of us. We are not ignorant of the great Noise and Stir there hath been about this in *Christendom*, to the scandalizing Christianity among both *Jews* and *Turks*: The Papists have improv'd it to downright Idolatry, affirming 'tis the real Body and Blood, and as such adores it, (one would think 'twere better let alone) others, that Christ is in it, tho' they know not how: One saith 'tis this, another 'tis that; while they all seem to expect that from it which it doth not necessarily administer; for want of distinguishing between that Bread of Life that came down from Heaven, that Flesh and Blood of Christ, which giveth Life to all that feed thereon, by which they dwell in him and he in them, and that Supper which was eaten by the Primitive Christians in Commemoration of his Death and Sacrifice; which are not so connext, as that the one necessarily includes the other, as Experience abundantly testifies, would People but be true to themselves herein; how many are there that receive this from Year to Year, who yet complain all their Lives of Deadness, Dryness and Leanness of Soul, and want of Power, not receiving that renewing of Life and Spiritual Strength that is propos'd in it, and so but an empty Shadow indeed; for how can they in truth expect to feed on Christ spiritually in their hearts, who will not admit that he really dwells in his Saints, but esteem it an Error in those that do; however, we believe all People ought to be well perswaded in their own Minds, and seriously considerate in these and other religious Practises, and not take up Things meerly traditionally, because others do it; nor ought they to be vehemently prest to or against Things not absolutely essential to Salvation, in which their Understandings are not clear; nor should any be scold or reproacht for those

John 6.
51, 56.

John 14.
20, 21,
23.

Things which to them are Matter of Conscience, and therefore Sacred, though to others it may appear of less Moment; a Practice that is a great Shame among People professing Christianity. Nor do we judge and condemn those that are found in the Practice either of this or Water-baptism as 'twas Primitively used, whose sober, Christian, circumspect Lives witnesseth to their sincere Intentions herein, who may be conscientiously tender in it, and fearful to omit it, 'til they are otherwise fully Perswaded: But to us, to whom the Barrenness and Emptiness of these outward visible Things are manifest, we cannot continue therein, yielding no true Soul-Satisfaction, nor administering any inward Spiritual Grace to us.

1 Pet. 2.
2, 3. Wherefore having tasted that the Lord is good and gracious, we wait for the sincere Milk of that Word by which we have been begotten to God, that we may receive strength thereby, and grow

2 Pet. 3.18. in Grace, and the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a greater Acquaintance with that true

Rev. 3.20. inward Spiritual Communion and Fellowship with him, wherein he sups with his Saints, and they

Eph. 5.30. with him; and receives Life by him, who dwells in them, and they in him; as the Members are joyned to the Head, and partakes of its Life, and

Joh. 15. 5. liveth by it; or the Branches to the Vine, which receives Life, Vertue and Nourishment from him whereby Fruit is brought forth to the Glory of God, and well pleasing to him. 'Tis not sufficient that we participate hereof once a Month or Quarter, but as the Jews had their Manna, fresh every Morning, so ought we to receive a daily supply, and renewing of strength in our inward Man, by eating that Heavenly Bread, that nourisheth up to Eternal Life, and drinking

Exod. 16.
21. Plentifully of that Well of Living-Water, which in the Saints springs up to Life Eternal; for as

Joh. 4. 14. in

in God we live, move, and have our very being; so is Christ the true and proper Life of the inward Man by which it truly lives to God, nor can it live but by him. Those that are begotten to God by the Word of Life, and are born again of the Spirit, are priviledged thus to feed on Christ, and enjoy him, which none can do that are not first quickened and made alive by him; none can receive Life, Sap and Vertue from him as Head and Vine, that are not first joyned to him as Members and Branches of him; nor is it sufficient to make People Members of Christ, and give them admittance to feed on him, in that they were sprinkled when Infants, &c. as we have already express'd, though they should eat Bread and drink Wine all their days.

Since then we no less enjoy the Substance without the Sign, why may we not omit it, as either being but temporary, or not of absolute necessity, as well as our Opposers do that which was instituted (to use their own term) at the same time, and with as great solemnity, and greater formality, and was no less positively commanded under the same pretence? Why may not the same Authority absolve us from the use of this, and excuse us from being chargeable with the breach of a Command of Christ, as release them from washing one anothers Feet, and secure them from the like censure? As also that of the Apostles, concerning things strangled and Blood, and that of *James* anointing the Sick with Oil? Why should they be thus partial? Have we not good reason to conclude, that if these had not been long since laid down, they would have cleav'd as close to them; and that had those of Baptism, and Bread and Wine been then discontinued also, they would be now as easie under its omission; for Tradition, Custom, and Education, makes greater impressions

Joh. 13. 4.

5. 8, 14, 15.

Acts 15.

20, 21.

Jam. 5.

14, 15.

ons on Mens minds than perhaps every one may be sensible of; nor is it an easie Task at first to move them from those things to which they have been fastned by it. Would but People wholly relinquish these Prejudices, and consider it impartially, 'tis probable there may appear no such real difference, as justly to omit the one, and yet with equal reason to continue the other; since 'tis not that Bread that gives life to the Soul, nor doth necessarily include it, but that Christ may be, and is received, and fed on without it. Nor that those can be thought to forget his Death and Sacrifice who sensibly partake of the Benefits thereof, and pursue its Ends; who are taught and assisted by him to live a godly righteous Life, and bears about in them the Marks of the Dying of our Lord Jesus; who died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, fulfilling the desires of their minds, but to him that died for them; that through the Power of his Resurrection they may mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh, and have Fellowship with his Sufferings, in whom his Life is made manifest; neither can those who acknowledge his Death and Sacrifice, and partake from time to time of this Bread and Wine in memory of it, and yet are not by him redeemed from a vain Conversation, and made conformable to his Death, and so feed on him as to Participate of that Life that comes by him, in any-wise escape Damnation, let the Pretensions be what they will.

Tit. 2. 14.

Gal. 1. 4.

Mat. 1. 21.

2 Cor. 5.

15.

Phil. 3. 10.

Since then God hath replenisht our Hearts with his Grace, and hath not with-held his Heavenly Manna from us, but daily owns us by his comfortable Presence, to our great satisfaction, under the Omission of these things, supplying our Wants and Necessities as we have recourse unto him in that which ever hath access unto him, having our

con-

continual Dependency on him, who enables and strengthens those of us * that retain our Primitive Sincerity and Integrity, to lead a Sober, Pious, Christian Life, as becomes the Gospel of Christ, which is the certain Product of Spiritual Grace; and forasmuch as our Opposers acknowledge it to be but an outward visible Sign, and dare not say that the inward Spiritual Grace is tied to it, nor that 'tis of absolute necessity to Salvation; with what Reason do they Unchristian us, and so load us with Calumnies and Accusations on this Account, using it as an Instance to blacken us, and condemn in gross our whole Christian Profession, principally from hence, as though 'twere the chief Thing that constitutes a Christian, and entitles him to the Benefits that come by Christ.

What shall we think then of perhaps more than two parts in three of their own Assembly, who no more practice this than do we, and yet are many of them as sober People, and if we may know (as Christ directs us) by their Fruits, are doubtless as near the Kingdom, and no less in a State of Grace, than are those who so exult in, and value themselves upon this Performance; which however it may bound and distinguish particular Societies and Communions, 'tis certain no Observations nor Performances short of being ruled and governed by the Spirit of Christ, as Head, can entitle us to a Membership in him; we may make a specious Shew, and carry a System of Divinity in our Heads, but if he rules not in our Hearts we are none of his. 'Twere well they were as thoughtful to fulfil all Righteousness in every Respect, and as zealously careful and concern'd to observe and punctually perform all the Com-

* For we intend not to Apologize for those who tho' they may be call'd by our Name, yet live loosely and walk disorderly, and are Blemishes and a Grief to us; which yet ought to be imputed to their Insincerity or Unwatchfulness, and not to the Insufficiency of the Principle they pretend to.

mands and Injunctions to which the Christian Religion obligeth them, and to qualify themselves to be rightful Inheritors of those Blessings and Promises pronounced by our Saviour, as they tenaciously adhere to this, as tho' 'twere indeed the Sum both of Mens Duty and Enjoyments, and that their Salvation turned upon this very Pin; which yet People may perform while their Wills are unsubdued, and Lusts unmortified. But we find that Men have been apt enough to be busily employed about Mint, Annis, and Cummin, whilst they neglect the weightier Matters, to run into, and cry up, and maintain those exterior Parts of Religion, that are reconcilable to an Unconverted State.

If the Professors of Christianity were less taken up about Signs and Shadows, and nice and unnecessary Scrutinies and Distinctions wherewith they perplex it, and more devoted to observe the weighty, important, and indispensable Precepts of Christ, and demonstrate the Power that Christianity hath over their Minds, by affording signal Instances of their being his true Disciples, and rightful Heirs of his Kingdom, being in measure invested with his Divine Vertues and Graces, we should have less Envy, Variance, Back-biting, and Detraction, which weakens the common Interest of Piety, and gives our common Enemy an Advantage over us. If all that means well did but pursue Virtue, love it, and encourage it where ever it appears, and hate Vice and Evil in all, and discountenance it every where, and make these the Measure of their Christian Charity, rather than Parallel Opinions in lesser Matters, 'twould bring us nearer together, and more advance True Piety, than all their contending about different Apprehensions in Things far less essential. God, who regards not Names, but Natures,
knows

knows among all Nations and People who are his; and the Rule he left us to know also was their Fruits, their Actions being the exertion of their Wills; all Mankind are either under the Power and Conduct of the Spirit of God, or else of the Devil; all are either Carnal or Spiritual-minded, and as is the spring and bent of their Desires and Affections, so is their Actions; each Birth have their proper Product, which are contrary to each other. So that let what Notions or Opinions soever possess Mens Heads, they live according to that Spirit and Principle that governs their Hearts. We cannot gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thriftles; no Fountain sends forth bitter Water and sweet at the same time. 'Tis an Evangelical Truth, Those that live in envy and Strife, and bring forth the Fruits of the Flesh, are of their Father the Devil; and those who by the Spirit mortifies those corrupt Lusts and Affections, and bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour, by a Sober, godly, righteous Life, are of God; for herein the Children of God are manifest from the Children of the Devil.

Gal. 5. 19,
20, 21, 22,
23. 24.
Eph. 5. 9.

1 John. 3.
10.

Thus have we candidly, though briefly, expressed our real Opinion and Belief in those Points in which we apprehend our Adversaries have endeavour'd most to expose us, which we hope may prove Satisfactory to those who are not resolved to think ill of us: but to speak fully to every critical, trifling Objection, were a tedious Task, as well as vastly beyond the Extent of our Design. We request our serious Neighbours to hear and see for themselves, and not to take things upon trust from others, and to judge the things they know not, but condemn us by hearsay; don't be imposed upon by those whose peevish humours would have all do like themselves who

who either look not at all, or but very coyly in-
to the Books of those they have taken a Pet a-
gainst, whose Perswasion in some things differs
from what they have pronounced Orthodox, as
tho' Truth were their Peculiar inclosure, which
yet certainly argues either a great deal of Preju-
dice, or a feeble and fleeting Judgment, that
dares not trust itself: Were our Books stuf-
t with such palpable Errors as is suggested, surely 'twere
not so dangerous reading them: Who fears to
read the Alchoran? But on the contrary, 'tis a
strong indication that they contain much truth;
for as 'tis the Proper Object of the Understanding,
so where it appears with a clear Evidence, an-
swering to Peoples own Experience, 'tis very
forcible and prevalent upon the Minds of those
who diligently seek it for love of it, and willingly
deposite all pre-ingagements of Mind in its disqui-
sition. Be then so just to us, and kind to your
selves, as to relinquish all Prejudice and Prepos-
sessions, and impartially examine the truth of
these things; search the Sacred Scriptures dili-
gently, with an inclination rather to find and em-
brace Truth, than to support a received Opinion;
try whether 'tis so or not, comparing it with
your own Experiences and the Witness of God in
your own Hearts. Though our Belief in some of
these Particulars don't exactly quadrate to that of
our Opposers, it don't therefore necessarily fol-
low, 'tis not agreeable to Truth and Scripture;
nor can they give us any infallible assurance, that
their Conceptions are a true Standard of Truth,
notwithstanding they vend their Apprehensions
as the only Orthodox, yes, and are displeased too
with those that can't be determined by them.

We have no design carrying on behind the Cur-
tain, howsoever our Sober Demeanour may be
uncharitably (not to say maliciously) insinuated,

as only a Cover of Sheeps Cloathing upon the Wolves Nature ; and our most solemn Declaration of our Belief in several Religious Points (being undeniable Truths) construed, and suggested by some Men as only a fair cover wherewith we guild over our Poyson, that it may pass the less suspected, and be the more glibly swallowed. What think you, is not this the heighth of Prejudice and Envy in the abstract ; Would they themselves be content to be thus interpreted ? We have no intent to decoy and trapan People, that we should walk under a disguise, which Intrigues usually have interest at one end of them, which can't be our case, who neither give nor take Money for Preaching ; so that the increase of our Numbers will not fill our Coffers. We have no other Interest to promote, but the Advancement of True Piety and Christianity : And having Love and Good-will to all People, more especially to those whose minds are awakened, and Hearts warmed, having true fervent Desires, and living Breathings towards God, thirsting after a nearer and more satisfactory knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, than barely a profession and hear-say of him, and therefore what we have found advantageous, assistant and satisfactory to us, in our unwearied pursuit after Peace with him, that we recommend to others. We call People home to the Gift of God in themselves, which only can do them good, that every one may know the good Shepherd and Bishop of Souls for themselves, and hear and know his Voice in them, from that of a stranger, and learn of him and follow him, who is pure, and ever leads to Purity and Holiness, that so his offering up of himself for them, may be of benefit to them, and they experience the great Salvation of God ; for impress this upon your Minds, and take it along
with

Rom. 8.
9, 14.

Rom. 12.
9.

with you, That notwithstanding our Saviour hath paid a Ransom for us, and made an Attonment through the precious Blood of his Cross; yet if we experience not the end of his Coming, and Death effected, and answered in ourselves, it shall avail us nothing; except we know him a Saviour and Supporter near; except we know a Principle of Divine Light and Life, to illuminate our Minds to revive and warm our languishing Hearts, to beget and increase true Love to God, and the living Faith, that gives victory to convert us, and govern our Thoughts, to renew and regulate our Wills, and limit our Desires, and bridle our Tongues, excite holy Inclinations, and keep up a due Heat in our Christianity; and strengthens our Minds in that which is good and well-pleasing to God: Except we know these things in and for our selves, all our outside shew of Religion is but vain, and our profession of Christ shall profit us nothing, but we shall lye down in sorrow at last; for none are Christ's, but those that have his Spirit, and are influenced by it; nor are any Children of God, but those that are led by the Spirit of God; which begets in the Mind a detestation of Sin and Evil, and a love to Purity, Goodness and Vertue; wherefore, laying aside all strife and animosities, all envy and evil-speaking, let us abhor that which is Evil, and cleave to that which is Good, and address our selves with a due and humble Application to the accomplishment of that most concerning and Important Affair of our Lives, the working out our Salvation. And let every one follow the Lord faithfully, according to what is made known to them, knowing that we shall be judged according to our Knowledge, and that 'twill be happy for those whose Wills and Performances correspond with their Understandings, in that Day when all must stand

stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and give an Account of their Deeds done in the Body, and receive a Sentence hereafter; either, *Come ye blessed,* or *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.* It won't be then of what Congregation or Confession of Faith, or of what Perswasion amongst the many wast thou? Amongst all which there will then but Two Sorts, the Sheep; and the Goats; those that heard the Shepherd's Voice, and followed him, who where guided and governed by the good Spirit of God in their Hearts; and those who wrapping their Talent in a Napkin, stifled Convictions and neglecting the Day of their Visitation, continued under the Dark Power of the Evil One. One may go a great Way, and make a fair Shew of Religion and Piety, and yet be turned to the left Hand; 'tis not having our Heads filled with curious sublime Notions, though of never so fine and elevated a Speculation; let's trim and garnish our Lamps never so finely, 'twill not administer an Entrance without the Heavenly Oil, without that Holy Divine Unction fills our Hearts enlightens our Minds, enflames our Affections to a due Watchfulness and Obedience to its Teachings; which are the most assured Marks of our being really in Christ, in whom only our Acceptance is.

That you with us, and we with you, may so circumspectly live up to our Light and Knowledge given by Christ, as that our Consciences may not condemn us; but that, having finished our Days here with Comfort, we may lay down our Heads in Peace, with a well-grounded Hope of a Joyful Resurrection, and have Boldness in the Day of Judgment; is our Hearty Desire.

For howsoever People may have been possessed with the contrary, by those who probably have left nothing unattempted, which their Invention

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could

could supply, to fix an Odium, and scare People from us, we believe the Resurrection as delivered to us, in the holy Scriptures; and our Adversaries can't reasonably pretend to know more; in which we willingly acquiesce, content that Faith supply the Defect of Demonstration, esteeming it consentaneous to reason, to forbear even the most abstracted Reasoning about that which is above Reason. We doubt not in the least either the Reality or Excellency of it; but our great Care, and necessary Concern is, that by any Means we may attain to the Resurrection of the Just; and then it is sufficient that when our Lord appears,

1 Joh 3 2. we shall be like him: Which Hope and Expectations ought to excite in all, most fervent Desires, and vigorous Pursuits after Purity and Holiness.

If what we have written for your Information; may find some Place with those, who being impartial, and inquiring, have room to receive it, and that it contributes to their Benefit and Satisfaction, we have our End: But for those who are full, or are Critical, and ready to Carp at every Word or Sentence that is not plac'd to their Mind, if not also pre-judge it, as 'tis not intended for them; so we don't suppose 'twill prove to their good Liking, nor meet with a Reception amongst them. For we don't propose to reconcile our whole Belief and Persuasion in religious Matters to that of our Opposers; who notwithstanding, what we have writ, we expect will yet accuse us of Error. However, having thus far declared ourselves in the most necessary Points of the Christian Religion, we don't think ourselves farther obliged to answer the Cavils and Criticisms of such who may appear contentious, and will never want something to object against those that come not up in all things exactly to their Level. Whom yet we advise, rather to be quiet, and

study

study to know and govern themselves, according to that Religion that is Pure and Undeiled before God, and leads to Visit and Assist the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep themselves from the Spots and Defilements of this World. Were this (as it ought) our Principle Care and Concern in our Conduct, we should have little Mind or Leisure to differ about Matters of less Moment: And while we seem zealously to contend about Religion, frustrate its End. We should not be taken up in Disputing what that Principle is, which God hath plac'd in us to do us good, and in the Mean Time neglect its Assistance, and obstruct its Operation upon the Mind, but be given up to be leavened and changed by it, that we may partake of the Blessings thereof; and with it build on the Foundation God hath laid, that which may abide the fiery Tryal. To which we recommend you, and remain your Peaceable and Loving Neighbours,

James 1,
27.

1 Cor. 3.
11, 12,
13, 14.

W. C. A. P. J. H. &c.

T H E E N D.